

# YOUTH SERVICES POLICY

<b>Title:</b> Education Policy <b>Next Annual Review Date:</b> 09/24/2013	<b>Type:</b> B. Classification, Sentencing and Service Functions <b>Sub Type:</b> 7. Education <b>Number:</b> B.7.1
	<b>Page 1 of 8</b>
<b>References:</b> La. R.S. 15:905, 17:154.1, and 17:221; Department of Education Bulletins 118, 131, 741, 1508, 1530, and 1702 Subpart 1 and 2; ACA Standards 2-CO-5B-01, 2-CO-5F-01 (Administration of Correctional Agencies); 4-JCF-1C-15, 4-JCF-3A-04, 4-JCF-5D-01, 4-JCF-5D-02, 4-JCF-5D-03, 4-JCF-5D-04, 4-JCF-5D-05, 4-JCF-5D-06, 4-JCF-5D-07, 4-JCF-5D-08, 4-JCF-5D-09, 4-JCF-5D-10, 4-JCF-5D-11, 4-JCF-5D-12, 4-JCF-5E-02, 4-JCF-5E-03 (Performance-Based Standards For Juvenile Correctional Facilities); Youth Services Policies A.2.14 "Secure Care Facility Staffing", B.3.1 "Composition/Location/Retention of Active and Inactive Secure Care Youth Records", B.3.2 "Access to and Release of Active and Inactive Youth Records", C.5.3 "Quality Assurance Reviews - Central Office Audits, Secure Facilities, and Regional Offices"	
<b>STATUS: Approved</b>	
<b>Approved By:</b> Mary L. Livers, Deputy Secretary	<b>Date of Approval:</b> 09/24/2012

## I. AUTHORITY:

Deputy Secretary of Youth Services as contained in R.S. 36:405. Deviation from this policy must be approved by the Deputy Secretary.

## II. PURPOSE:

To establish educational and vocational programs, and youth participation in those programs at Youth Services (YS) secure care facilities.

## III. APPLICABILITY:

Deputy Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Undersecretary, Deputy Undersecretary, Chief of Operations, Director of Education, Regional Directors, Facility Directors, and Principals of schools located on the grounds of a YS secure care facility. Each Facility Director is responsible for the implementation of this policy, and for conveying its contents to the youth and applicable staff.

## IV. DEFINITIONS:

**Alternative State School Program** - an educational school program that aligns with the standards stated in Bulletin 741 in order to meet the specific needs of a particular segment of youth within the community. There are three types of alternative school programs:

Alternative within Regular Education - the curriculum addresses state standards of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education as published in Bulletin 741. Upon graduation, youth earn a state approved high school diploma.

Alternative to Regular Education - the curriculum does not address state standards of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education as published in Bulletin 741. Upon graduation, youth earn a General Educational Development (GED) diploma.

Combination - a program which offers both "Alternative within Regular Education" and "Alternative to Regular Education."

**Connections Process** – a one-year process for overage youth enrolled in 8th grade to receive targeted instruction and accelerated remediation aimed at helping them attain a high school diploma, GED, or State-approved Skills Certificate. High School and GED youth can also work towards Industry-Based Certification (IBC).

**General Education Development (GED)** – a certificate awarded to youth who have passed an approved high school equivalency test, which certifies that the youth has American high school-level academic skills. The GED is sometimes referred to as a General Equivalency Diploma or General Education Diploma.

**Individualized Education Plan (IEP)** - a legally binding written document which describes the educational program that has been designed to meet the unique needs of a youth who have been identified as having exceptionality according to Bulletin 1508, Pupil Appraisal Handbook.

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**Individualized Learning Plan (ILP)** - a written plan for regular education youth enrolled in school at a secure care facility. The ILP shall include meaningful and specific educational and vocational goals, as well as any special instructional concerns that have been identified.

**Industry Based Certification (IBC)** - a credential, usually issued by an industry or industry group, that verifies an individual has met the skill standards established by that industry or industry group, as minimal requirements to successfully enter the workforce and compete in that particular occupational area.

**Post-Secondary Education** - any schooling, beyond the high school level is considered "post-secondary". Post-secondary education is often referred to as higher education. Undergraduate, postgraduate and vocational schools make up the various types of post-secondary education. Learning trades is done at vocational schools. These are also called trade schools or career colleges.

***School Building Level Committee (SBLC)*** - a problem-solving, decision-making group that meets on a scheduled basis to receive referrals from teachers, parents, or other professionals on individual youth who are experiencing difficulty in school because of academic and/or behavior problems. It is through the SBLC that a referral can be made to pupil appraisal personnel for an individual evaluation.

***Special School District (SSD)*** - created by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education for the purpose of providing special educational services to the identified exceptional youth population at all state facilities.

***Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)*** - assessments of skills in reading, math computation, applied mathematics, language, vocabulary, language mechanics, and spelling designed to measure learning equivalency in adults in math, reading and other subjects.

***Title I*** - a federally funded supplemental program to assist educationally disadvantaged youths in attaining higher levels of achievement.

***Vocational Education*** - an organized educational program that offers a variety of courses which are directly related to preparation of individuals for employment in current or emerging occupations requiring other than a baccalaureate or advanced degree.

## **V. POLICY:**

It is the Deputy Secretary's policy to provide comprehensive year round educational and vocational programs which include a broad variety of components appropriate to the needs of youth assigned to a secure care facility. The YS educational program has been approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education as a combination alternative program, and shall operate in accordance with State laws.

The program shall include:

- A. A written standardized competency-based curriculum, which meets Louisiana State Standards, supported by age-appropriate materials and classroom resources;
- B. Placement of youth for academic skills ranging from primary to college level;
- C. Provisions for all youth to have the opportunity to earn a high school diploma or GED;

- D. Flexible scheduling to allow for open entry/open exit to all educational programs; and
- E. Compliance with the Louisiana Department of Education certification laws for academic and vocational instructors.

**VI. SECURE CARE FACILITY EDUCATION PROGRAM:**

The YS education program at each secure care facility shall consist of the following:

- A. An initial screening and educational assessment to determine each youth's educational needs. The Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) is initially administered by trained and qualified staff to youth during the direct admission process, prior to enrollment in school, and thereafter every six (6) months, and/or upon exit from the program.
- B. Upon direct admission, an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) shall be developed for regular education youth that shall include the following information:
  - 1. TABE results,
  - 2. education needs (academic, vocational),
  - 3. subject area skills partially mastered and not mastered,
  - 4. youth's strengths, and
  - 5. accommodations, modifications, and targeted instructional skills (benchmarks).
- C. The TABE test is administered during direct admission to assess current academic performance in Reading, Language and Mathematics. While this assessment shall continue to be utilized, youth will be enrolled in their appropriate grade level, based on age, last grade attended, prior school history and test history. The School Building Level Committee (SBLC) shall meet and determine the most appropriate grade placement based upon the above information. If prior school history is unavailable placement tests may be utilized.
- D. Beginning in 2011, youth who are 15 years of age by September 30<sup>th</sup>, and two (2) or more grade levels behind academically, shall be eligible for the Connections Process, which is replacing the Options Program. The youth will be enrolled as 8<sup>th</sup> graders. This is a one-year process for overage youth to receive targeted instruction and accelerated remediation's aimed at helping them attain a high school diploma, GED, or State-approved Skills Certificate. High school and GED youth may also work towards Industry-Based Certification (IBC).

Current Options youth may enter any pathway in which they achieve the entrance scores on TABE, pending an SBLC review, and according to policy guidelines reflected in the Connections Process.

- E. A written Individual Education Plan (IEP) shall be developed for youth who have been identified as having an exceptionality according to Bulletin 1508, Pupil Appraisal Handbook. Special School District (SSD) provides special education services to these youth who have been identified in a secure care facility. Special School District also provides a pupil appraisal team that conducts individual evaluations and re-evaluations in accordance with guidelines set forth in Bulletin 1508.
- F. Academic and vocational counseling to assist and encourage each youth in developing his educational goals.
- G. The opportunity for each student to enter the program at his own instructional level, and advance through the continuum of educational services at his individual pace.
- H. A Title I federally funded supplemental program which offers academic support to the educational programs.
- I. Sufficient classroom space to accommodate the designated capacity of the facility in an environment conducive to teaching and learning.
- J. Adequate instructional materials and equipment to support the curriculum.
- K. Library services that meet Louisiana Secondary Library Standards. Criteria used to select, acquisition and maintain library materials shall reflect the different reading levels, languages, special interests, and ethnicities of the youth. The designated library facilitator and/or teacher shall establish the hours of availability for youth access to the library. Staffing shall be in accordance with YS Policy A.2.14.

Adequate libraries shall also be maintained on each housing unit to support leisure and homework activities.

- L. A life skills curriculum shall be implemented as part of the school program.
- M. Vocational Education programs that shall be structured, sequential, and time-limited, with emphasis on skill development using the State approved curriculum. Vocational programs shall be accessible to all youth, appropriate to their age, interest, and abilities.

- N. Incentives for educational participation, and formal recognition of specific educational achievements.
- O. Mandatory school attendance requirements. Work assignments, visitation, counseling and other work programs shall not hinder attendance.

**VII. EDUCATIONAL RECORDS:**

- A. Educational records shall be controlled from unauthorized and improper disclosure utilizing secure placement, preservation, and safeguards with respect for the right to privacy, in accordance with YS Policy B.3.2. Only those with legitimate business and a lawful right to the information shall have access to the files. Although the hard copy education records may be maintained in a secure area in the school, the contents shall also be included in the youth's Master Record, and shall be filed in accordance with YS Policy B.3.1.
- B. Upon transfer / reintegration / transition of a youth, school records shall be completed and forwarded by the Principal within 10 calendar days as specified:
  - 1. For youth being placed on supervision or placement in a community program, the completed school records shall be provided to the Community Based Services (CBS) Regional Office of origin, and to the youth's legal parent/ guardian, upon written request.
  - 2. For youth released / discharged from the custody of YS, school records shall be provided to the youth if 18 years of age or older, or to the legal parent/guardian if under 18 years of age. School records shall be provided to local school districts upon written request.
- C. No reference to YS or to the youth's legal status with the agency shall be noted on any correspondence or materials referenced in this section. All signatures, names, and titles of employees shall reflect only school titles. Each school located on the grounds of a secure care facility shall use appropriate letterhead identifying the school and school officials only.

**VIII. STAFF DEVELOPMENT:**

Professional development plans for OJJ schools and educational staff are written to facilitate and assist in improving academic performance for all youth, with a strategic focus on targeting the needs of low achieving youth.

This is supported and facilitated by the following:

- A. Performing a needs assessment of the facility, by analyzing student performance data including TABE, LEAP, iLEAP, GEE, End of Course, and GED test.
- B. The Principal and school leadership team shall develop and implement staff development initiatives and activities annually, by which staff receives quality professional staff development targeting their needs, based on the needs of the youth. Initiatives and activities may be adjusted to address needs occurring throughout the school year.
- C. The delivery of school-based and participation in outside staff development opportunities as needed, that focus on best practices for delivering instruction to “at risk” youth or youth in an incarcerated setting. Topics shall be determined according to school staff and youth needs.
- D. All staff development initiatives shall include an agenda, a sign-in sheet, and be documented in individual teacher professional growth plans.
- E. Principals shall monitor the instructional strategies, best practices, and teaching practices of educational staff according to the Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching, to evaluate the alignment of the curriculum with state standards as evidenced by test data. Monthly walk-through observations and review of lesson plans, shall also be conducted throughout the school year. At the end of each fiscal year, teacher evaluations shall be submitted to the Director of Education for review. Following review, evaluations are returned to the Principal to be maintained on file.

**IX. QUALITY ASSURANCE:**

- A. An annual review by Central Office education staff shall be conducted at each school located on the grounds of a secure care facility to measure the effectiveness of the educational program against stated performance objectives.
- B. A report of findings shall be submitted to the Facility Director within 14 business days of the review, with copies submitted to the Deputy Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Chief of Operations, and Regional Director.

- C. Additional reviews shall be conducted in accordance with YS Policy No. C.5.3.

**Previous Regulation/Policy Number:** B.7.1  
**Previous Effective Date:** 05/18/12  
**Attachments/References:**